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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
Jan. 18, 2006

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## **Cassis: Rebuild Wixom interchange now** *Interchange critical element in retaining Ford plant*

State Senator Nancy Cassis today greeted industry reports that the Wixom Ford plant would likely stay open with optimism and urged immediate action on the Wixom/I-96 interchange reconstruction.

A report in today's Detroit News indicates that the Wixom plant has the edge over several rival facilities as Ford looks to streamline its operations and eliminate unneeded and less efficient facilities. Wixom's relatively updated facilities and capacity for easy expansion have convinced some auto industry experts that it is safe from closure. The long-awaited reconstruction of the Wixom Road interchange would greatly improve access to the plant, giving it additional advantages versus Ford plants in other states.

"A large part of Ford's decision will be based on whether the Wixom plant is economically viable, and that includes the surrounding infrastructure," said Cassis, R-Novi and chair of the Senate Finance Committee. "Since 1997 I have been working to improve the safety and economic development of Wixom through this upgrade. Moving to immediately begin work this construction season on the Wixom/I-96 interchange will send a powerful signal that we are serious about retaining this facility."

Gov. Jennifer Granholm has vetoed the Wixom ramp reconstruction twice, most recently in October. However, in November she indicated that it could proceed when the Legislature once again appropriates the funding.

“We need an affirmative commitment to begin construction now,” Cassis said. “No more games, no more delays, jobs are on the line. It is time for us all to come together and get the appropriate legislation done so the project can proceed.”

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